

**To:** Breen, Barry[Breen.Barry@epa.gov]; Natarajan, Nitin[Natarajan.Nitin@epa.gov]  
**From:** Stanislaus, Mathy  
**Sent:** Mon 8/10/2015 6:57:32 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Animas River release

Sent from my Windows Phone

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**From:** Fritz, Matthew  
**Sent:** 8/10/2015 2:55 PM  
**To:** Stanislaus, Mathy  
**Subject:** FW: Animas River release

FYI

**From:** Fritz, Matthew  
**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2015 2:55 PM  
**To:** Elkins, Arthur  
**Subject:** Animas River release

Good afternoon Art,

You may have heard about an spill-related incident at an abandoned mine site in Southwestern Colorado. The site's name is the Gold King Mine.

Here is what I have learned over the last several days:

EPA staff, with an EPA contractor, were out at this site last week. Their purpose was to address a leak or seepage that was coming out of a tunnel from the mine – draining into the Animas River. In the course of their work, they moved some material with a backhoe and, as a result, created a release of pooled up water with contaminants into the Animas. This occurred on Wednesday.

Information around this release came in over the next couple of days and based on the information that was being collected and reported back, work was initiated to manage this release through the Incident Command structure. In essence, this release of water and contaminants (primarily metals) began moving downstream with the water column as a plume – to the point where it could be observed by ASPECT from the air. As the magnitude of the incident increased so did EPA's response and, as I type, 3 regions are involved (6,8 and 9) and many different components from HQ are involved.

The efforts over the weekend have focused on the response – collecting samples, notifying local governments and the public, etc. With that work underway, there will be an increasing need to determine what happened at the mine site, itself. Toward that end, Mathy is working to assemble a team of individuals with expertise and experience (i.e., engineers, equipment operators, etc.) in the area of infrastructure in a natural setting to evaluate the work that was happening at the mine site. From what I understand, Mathy is trying to see if he can get an independent team from the Army Corps or the Bureau of Reclamation to assist with this review – and not have it conducted by the region.

I did hear that there is mention of protocols and procedures – specifically, were appropriate protocols and procedures followed while the work was occurring at this site. I know whatever entity Mathy fashions to explore the matter will be assessing the overall approach that was utilized.

I wanted to put this on your radar so that you are aware of the situation and the assessment that Mathy will be initiating. I am sure Mathy can provide updates – if desired – as this aspect of the work related to the inadvertent release continues.

Thanks.